ATTRACTING CUSTOMERS

Transcript
Attracting Customers

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LESSON 1:
THE NEEDS OF YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE
Key Concepts

[3.1.1.1] You use social media to provide value to prospects by answering questions, responding to comments and sharing content throughout the buying process – from awareness to consideration, until a prospect is ready to buy. You can warm up prospects and tee up conversations if you post the right content for the right people at the right time. Content for social selling differs from content marketing in that it is specifically with the aim to attract, find & engage with prospects with the ultimate goal of closing sales.

[3.1.1.2] The typical content types used in social selling include: blogs, e-books, videos, toolkits and presentations (e.g. SlideShare)

[3.1.1.3] It's important to recognize the importance of secondary content types that can be used also: lists, Q&As, testimonials, quotes, facts and stats.

[3.1.1.4] Content creations vs content curation – there are benefits associated with each. Content creation benefits: helps establish you as a thought leader, promotes your personal brand, provides the relevant insight the buyer needs. Content curation: keeps you informed, provides time efficiencies, helps your prospects be more successful and helps build relationships.

[3.1.1.5]

้ำ Having great content for social selling can have a positive knock on effect for your website’s SEO. To see the benefits, it is important to integrate your content for social selling into your overall SEO strategy. So how do we do this? Firstly, you need to select the content you create and curate in a way that will boost your SEO. The best way to do this is by creating & curating content that contains the keywords you need to boost your search rankings.

้ำ Content for social selling can have many positive effects on your website’s SEO. First of all, the more content you have, the more opportunities you have to use keywords that will improve your SEO. Coupled with this, the Google algorithm favors substantial content so the more you post, the higher you will rank in organic Google searches. Having unique content can yield new rankings & page visits. Lastly, having strong content can keep users on a webpage longer. Google favors low bounce rates & if users stay on your web page longer that will in turn boost your SEO.

The Benefits of the Right Content

[3.1.2.1] The measure of who you are as a professional has become as easy to find out as a search on social networks. The best part is that you get to decide what your social media presence says about who you are. You have complete control over what people see and what messages you communicate to the outside world via content curation & creation.

[3.1.2.2] A credible personal brand can be achieved in three steps: optimizing your profile, social sharing, and social engagement. The first step in getting started with social selling is profile optimization. One of the most basic steps in getting started in social selling is establishing your professional brand on social networks through your online profiles, specifically LinkedIn. The second step in social selling is sharing. A word of warning: don’t be too “sales-y.” Everyone loves to buy things, but no one likes to get sold to. The goal is to build relationships by offering advice and expertise, not product-centric messaging. The third and final step is engagement. Engage with your
network about content that they share. Congratulate them about a work anniversary or big accomplishment. Activities such as these keep you top of mind and show that you care about them.

[3.1.2.3] Strong content helps: generate leads, nurture leads and builds your brand.

[3.1.2.5] Let’s start with the top of the funnel. This is where your traffic is coming from. You need to focus on having this content optimized for search so that your website is coming up in the searches you want it to. Look at where your traffic is coming from. Concentrate on areas most conducive to driving conversions & shape your content adheringly. The middle of the funnel is the conversion phase. This is where the real work begins. You’ve got their attention. Now you have to keep it. At this point sales people need to focus on creating/curating content that drives the maximum amount of conversions. Using analytics track the content that results in the max. amount of conversions (not just engagements like likes or shares) and continue to share the best performing conversion content. The bottom of the sales funnel is where you make the sale and acquire the customer. And finally, where you continue to support your other sales funnel efforts by delivering relevant news, case studies and suggestions that reinforce what a great deal or decision the customer made.

[3.1.3.6] The target customer’s journey is fragmented among many channels, so you need to identify how to track and reach them throughout their journey.

[3.1.2.7] 1. 75% of the B2B buyers use social media to support purchase decisions. 2. In the final stage of the purchasing process, when stakes are highest, online professional networks are the number 1 information resource preference of buyers. 3. B2B buyers most active in using social media to support the buying process were more senior and had 84% bigger budgets, made 61% more purchase decisions, and had influence over a greater span of purchase decisions than those buyers who did not use social media to support their purchase process.

The Drivers of Relevant Content

[3.1.3.1] When you’re putting together content, the key questions to ask yourself are: who you’re creating or curating for? What are the topics they care about? Which channels they use. And do we have sources we can curate content from?

[3.1.3.2] The PRISM funnel is a useful framework for planning your social selling and content marketing. PRISM is supported by 3 elements. The first element is Content. What you share is what will drive engagement and conversion. You need to combine created content with curated independent content. The second element is Tools & Technology. As a busy salesperson your time is limited. Save time with tools to accelerate your content filtering, scheduling your social sharing, and track your results. The third element supporting the PRISM framework is Process. The best tools and most relevant content won’t make a difference if you don’t have a solid social selling process and culture in place. When using the PRISM framework, we are looking at People, Relationships, Inbound Traffic, Subscribers and Monetization. When it comes to People you need to define who you’re trying to reach. Ask what type of content will resonate with them to define your approach to curation. Moving on to Relationships. Developing relationships requires ongoing content that’s relevant to them at different stages. Build a pipeline of sharable, curated content combined with your own content plan. The third element is Inbound Traffic. While social selling is focused on specific people, social engagement and building relationships should drive traffic to your site. If you’re developing curated round-up posts or reports, include a link to your write up post, drive traffic with a call to action. Next up is Subscribers and social retargeting. Building a subscriber list is a great way to have an ongoing relationship with an engaged audience of followers. Use curated content to drive people back to your social accounts and your site. The last element of the PRISM funnel is Monetization.
Curated content should be driving conversion. Set targets for conversion and monitor which types of curated content, combined with your own created content, drives results. Do more of what works.

[3.1.3.3] Factors that ensure content is relevant and value-driving for your target audience include:

- Anything new happening in my customer’s business?
- Anything new happening in my customer’s competitors business?
- What are the latest updates in my sector?
- Latest industry trends

**Target Audience**

[3.1.4.1] You need to build an understanding of the types of content that are valuable and important to your target audience.

[3.1.4.2] Use the online tools available to identify what your target audience are most engaged with.

[3.1.4.3] Develop a deep understanding of your target buyer audience and their community and shape your content strategy accordingly.
LESSON 2: CREATING AND CURATING CONTENT
Creating Content

[3.2.1.3] It's important to create a professional & consistent tone of voice for when you are sharing & curating content to your network. It is best practice to keep your post copy short & to the point. Like you, your audience have busy lives & want to consume content quickly and easily. Keep post copy as short as possible while also getting your desired point across. From a creative look & feel perspective it is always advised to add either an image or a video to your post.

[3.2.1.4]

- In 2019 80% of all web traffic will come from video. If the objective of your content is to drive website traffic it is important to create & share a lot of video content to your network.
- Native video is when you share a video directly to your social platform, i.e.: uploading it directly to that platform as opposed to linking to a video from your social profile. Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter's algorithm all favors native video. This means that if you upload a video directly onto one of these social platforms their algorithms will reward the post with a greater no. of people reached. It is best practice to use native video as much as possible.
- All social platform's algorithms favor native video from a reach perspective, meaning your post will reach a higher volume of people if you use a video vs, a static image with your post. Consider A/B testing the same post copy with an image vs a video & analysing which post performs better for you based on your post objectives & overall social media goals.
- On LinkedIn the Maximum video size: 4,096 by 2,304 pixels. The Minimum size is: 256 by 144 pixels. When sharing links with an image on LinkedIn the image needs to be 1200 x 628 pixels. When you share links and articles to LinkedIn, the image preview will be scaled and cropped to fit a box of 552 pixels wide by 289 pixels tall.
- On LinkedIn the max. video length is 10minutes however they advise that the best performing video length is under 15seconds. It is advised to ensure the key message of your video is communicated before 8seconds as the majority of users drop off thereafter.
- Ensure that your image is not text heavy. Best practice for social media is to keep your image less than 20% text. Be clear. Make sure that the image makes clear what people will get when they click through to learn or read more. Be eye-catching. Choose something bright, clear, or unique to stand out in the News Feed.

[3.2.1.5]

- The average person will spend 11 years of their lives on their mobile phones. Irish people spend on average 6 hours a week on social media. Sales people are using these extremely high consumption rates as an opportunity to use people's mobile phones & social media platforms as a method of reaching new & current customers.
- When sharing a video or an image that will be viewed on desktop you can share a square or a landscape image/ video. Square image or video size is 1080px in width X 1080px in height. If you upload a landscape (horizontal) image or video, it will be scaled to 476px wide and retain its shape. When sharing content that will be consumed on mobile only it is best practice to share vertical images/ video. The vertical video will fill the users screen & typically yields stronger engagement than square or landscape content on mobile.
When posting content to your online community ask yourself is it relevant to your target audience? Is it something that is connected to your current or prospective new customers’ interests?

- Is the piece of content adding value to your online community? Does the content inform, educate, answer a question or meet your community’s needs?
- Is the content unique, original, or exclusive content or information that your audience cannot get anywhere else?
- Always insure that your creative is up to scratch and adheres to best practice. Ensure that if your videos have audio that they are subtitled, ensure that if you have text on a static image that it takes up less than 20% of the image. Always make sure to maintain a professional TOV when sharing owned or curated content to your online community.
- Identify the optimum time & date to post content to your online community. Using analytics, pinpoint the time of day or day of week that people are most likely to engage with your content & upweight content posting to those prime times.
- Always ensure that the content is aligned to the platform you are posting it on. People are more likely to read a long form blog article on LinkedIn than on Facebook. Analyze engagement metrics per content type per platform and shape what content you post on each accordingly.

Understanding the value of content creation tools is important – here are some:

- Canva/Pixlr: Easily create beautiful design and documents
- RiteTag: Get instant grading of hashtags & helps analyse your hashtag use
- Hubspot: Use inbound marketing & sales software to attract visitors
- Grammarly: Make your documents & posts clearer & mistake free

Curating Content

The different types of content suitable for curation in social selling includes:

- Case studies
- Expert opinions
- News articles
- Webinars
- Presentations
- Quotations
- Industry Blogs
- Ebooks

The most effective steps in curating content involve firstly, seeking and filtering the relevant content. Collaboration between sales and marketing to get larger columns of content and flag relevant content to the right team. Sharing across social - to maximize you need to share the right content with the right audience on the right channel.

Finally, analyze the performance of your ads against the objective of each post. Refine your content creation & curation process by doing more of what works based on what you are trying to achieve within your network.
[3.2.2.3] Using content curation tools can be a great help. For example, Anders Pink have a 10 step guide to building a sustainable social selling habit powered by effective curation. Step 1 is to define the drivers & ask why. Before you embark on the time and effort it will take to curate content, you need clear reasons for doing it. Step 2 is to define your target audience. This is where understanding your target buyers and their community is essential. Building out an understanding of the topics that interest them will help your curation efforts to be more focused. Step 3 is to get your roles and resources clear. Every sales professional should be sharing content themselves, and personalizing it with their insights. But that doesn’t mean that everyone needs to play an equal role in content curation across the sales team. Some people are going to be more naturally outward looking than others when it comes to finding and building sales intelligence. Step 4 is to start knowledge discovery. This is when you seek out the content you want to curate. Step 5 is to ensure you filter correctly through automation. This is where we get to the core of effective curation: Filtering. Step 6 is to work as a team. Content curation for social selling is easier and more scalable if you're working as a team. A sales and marketing team can work effectively together to scan a larger volume of content and flag relevant articles to the right people in the team. Step 7 is to share the right content in the right channels. To maximize your impact, you need to share curated content with the right audience, in the right channels, and at the right time. Step 8 is to build your community. It's important to find influencers, listen to your customers and be patient. Step 9 is to make it stick. It is vital that you build daily social selling habits. For social selling to be effective, it needs to be a continuous activity. Step 10 is to keep it fresh, get feedback and refine. Don't forget— you're doing this to help keep your network engaged and bring them useful content they would not otherwise find. So you need to know it's working for them.
LESSON 3: MATCHING CONTENT WITH CHANNELS
The Right Channels

[3.3.1.1] 67% of the average buyer’s journey is now done digitally. Decision makers consume at least 5 pieces of content before engaging with a sales rep. Considering this & that 75% of B2B buyers use social media to make purchasing decisions, having a strong social media presence & strong content for social selling can be incredibly valuable for the modern day salesperson.

[3.3.1.2] There are 590 million LinkedIn users worldwide, with 280 million of them being monthly active users. 61 million LinkedIn users are senior level influencers and 40 million are in decision-making positions. LinkedIn is an incredibly important platform for salespeople engaging in social selling. LinkedIn is the #1 channel B2B marketers use to distribute content at 94%. LinkedIn makes up more than 50% of all social traffic to B2B websites & blogs. 92% of B2B marketers include LinkedIn in their digital marketing mix.

[3.3.1.3] Let’s identify the best practices for social selling on LinkedIn and making best use of LinkedIn as a social sharing platform. We’ll start with Targeting. Targeting on LinkedIn is different from other platforms. You can target based on what people do professionally instead of what they do in their personal lives. It’s important to remember that LinkedIn is a professional network. It’s a place where people in all industries can go to build relationships & demonstrate experience & expertise. It is vital to maintain a professional TOV when you’re sharing content on LinkedIn. Groups are a great way to connect with current & potential customers. It’s important to build a trusted space for thoughtful conversations and meaningful relationships in your group. Empower members to ask questions, exchange knowledge, and create opportunities. Another great way to connect with potential customers is by using InMail. InMail is a credible, private, and customized messaging tool helping you contact any LinkedIn user, including 2nd and 3rd degree connections. When used well, InMail can generate a higher response rate, in comparison to low response rates from a cold call or cold email. Like other social media platforms, LinkedIn has some major influencers that are a must follow. You can also partner with LinkedIn influencers. LinkedIn influencers can drive a significant amount of relevant reach, engagement, traffic, and conversions. Finally, it is very important to analyze all content performance & adapt if necessary. LinkedIn’s native analytics has a good amount of information on audience and engagements & should be used regularly.

[3.3.1.4] Worldwide, there are over 2.27 billion monthly active Facebook users for Q3 2018 which is a 10 percent increase year over year. There are 1.15 billion mobile daily active users globally. The gender split is quite even with 74 percent of women report that they use Facebook, versus 62 percent of men. Facebook can be a powerful source of lead generation for B2B with 26% of Facebook users that clicked on a piece of content reporting to having sub sequentially made a purchase.

[3.3.1.5] Making the best use of Facebook as a social selling platform includes using:

- Innovative ad formats
- Intelligent targeting
- Facebook Live
- Groups
- Influencers
- Analytics

[3.3.1.6] There are 326 million monthly active Twitter users worldwide. In Ireland, there are 600,000 daily users. Ireland has the 10th highest Twitter users per capita in the world. 80% of Twitter users are on mobile & 20% are on desktop. It is important to consider this when choosing what content to share & ensure that it is mobile optimized.
[3.3.1.7] Making the best use of Twitter as a social selling platform includes using:

- Targeting
- Hashtags
- @Handles
- Groups
- Influencers
- Analytics

**Distributing your Content**

[3.3.2.1] Google alerts helps you keep track of developments in your sectors. Simple and Free, though not always comprehensive and not always the fastest way to track information. Using Tools like Buffer and Hootsuite are useful for scheduling a batch of content in multiple social networks. You can build up a library of quality content and schedule where and when you want to share it. Depending on level and package, some of these tools will suggest content to you, though they’re not really designed for curation. Lots of sites still publish content via RSS, so it’s important to follow those feeds. Tools like scoop.it, Feedly are good RSS readers. Their limitation is that you only see content from a fixed set of sites and sources that use RSS (and that’s not most sites). A range of tools have emerged to support social selling which are more full-service content curation tools. Feedly, Scoop.it and the aforementioned Anders Pink, are examples of these. In Anders Pink you can set keywords, domains, RSS feeds and twitter accounts you want to follow, and get a customized briefing on the latest content from the sources you want, refreshed every few hours.

[3.3.2.2] There is also value in using owned and curated content being distributed through email to your target audience.

[3.3.2.3] Owning and using an email database can facilitate this.

[3.3.2.4] There are also time-saving tools like MailChimp and Intercom for managing email marketing

[3.3.2.6] To keep an audience engaged you can embed content directly into your website or platform.

If the content is SEO optimized (i.e. using highly ranking search keywords) this will benefit your site and social platforms SEO & result in higher organic Google Search rankings.

Embedding content on your site or social platform can also improve the user experience. If there is a large amount of content to consume in one post it is best practice to put it into one video instead of having a large volume of posts. Websites with video content as opposed to text heavy layouts will be easier for a user to navigate & consume. Embedded content may also result in longer dwell times on site.

As previously mentioned, video will drive 80% of all web traffic in 2019. If the objective of your post is to drive traffic to another site, it is best practice to embed a video into your site or social platform linking to that other site.

As previously mentioned, Social Platform’s algorithms reward embedded video. If video is embedded on a site or a social platform it will receive a higher reach figure than if it were not embedded.
Analysing content performance using plug-in analytic software like Sprout Social can add great value. Determine what content works best for you, continue to create & curate the same types of content to yield similar or greater levels of engagement.

Increase engagement on your content by using share plug-ins. If you’re not subtly encouraging and engaging your readers to share your content on social media, your share count will fall short, as will the impact your content has on your engagement levels. Ensure to optimize your share buttons to drive as much engagement as possible by placing them in a very visible place for the user.

Adding social media plug-ins to your site or email signature will drive traffic to your social channels which may have a knock-on effect on social content engagements & followings.

Having a ‘sign up’ button plug-in on your site or blog is a quick an easy way to get a pool of very qualified leads that you can remarket to. It is also a very user-friendly way of getting engagement from users without them having to complete a sign-up form on another site.
LESSON 4: BUILDING AND ENGAGING YOUR NETWORK
Nurturing

[3.4.1.1], [3.4.1.2] You should understand how building your network of contacts within the online community and nurturing leads to increased sales. That involves knowing the touchpoints within the sales funnel where curated and created social content can nurture your network to support and drive sales.

[3.4.1.3]

❁ By actively engaging in different LinkedIn groups where your current & prospect clients are active you are more likely to connect with these people. It is advised to not only like, comment & share but to also contribute your own created or curated content to the group & start discussions yourself.

❁ Partnering with influencers & getting them to share your content can be a highly effective way of increasing your online community. For best results it is advised to get influencers to share a piece of your content to their network or do a direct call out to their community to connect with you.

❁ LinkedIn Sales Navigator is an advanced sales tool that helps sales professionals build and nurture customer relationships on the network. It helps you target the right people faster, understand and keep track of key customer leads and finally reach and engage with prospects.

❁ LinkedIn advertising allows you to quickly grow your community on LinkedIn. The easiest way to do this is by promoting a post which data shows will drive strong engagement from your target audience. Sponsored Content posts also feature a “Follow” button users can click & connect with you. You can also run Follower Ads that don’t display any content & are optimized to a target audience of people who are likely to follow your LinkedIn page.

[3.4.1.4] There are certain characteristics of a strong online community that you should aim to achieve. The first characteristic is that there is active conversation within your content & community. Does participation in your online community involve two-way discussions? It is the discussions and contributions that will lead to increased engagement and value. The second characteristic is that customers get real value from the content. You must consider how the online community is benefiting your customers or members? Your private online community should be aligned with the most important problems of your customer base. The third characteristic of a strong online community is strong engagement rates. It is vital to analyze your content performance. If your content is not receiving the levels of engagement you have set out to achieve you need to change your approach. The true sign of a strong online community is one where customers own & direct the conversation. This shows that they are engaging & getting value out of your content and is the ultimate sign of success.

Using Influencers

[3.4.2.1]

❁ Tweetdeck is Twitter’s free social media dashboard to help you manage all your tweets. You can set it to display any of your Twitter timeline items, mentions, direct messages, lists, trends, favorites, search results, or hashtags. You can also use it to find used of particular hashtag, which in turn can help you find influencers. You can also search by the number of retweets. People whose tweets are retweeted multiple times are likely to have some influence.
BuzzSumo allows you to use it to see who has had content shared the most. It includes an Influencers and Outreach section which allows you to find, analyze and follow influencers. You can sort this in many ways to determine who are the most important influencers on social media in your niche.

Social listening tools like Brandwatch are very effective when identifying influencers for social selling. Using any word as a search keyword you can listen out to any open source across the internet & find the most influential people talking about your defined keyword. Brandwatch gives you a selection of automatically categorized influencer lists based on your search keyword. Each tab on the Dashboard covers a different type of influencer – Top Authors, Top Tweeters, Top Bloggers and Key Advocates and Detractors, so you can track the most influential conversations wherever they are taking place.

Once you have identified what people are influential to your business the next step is to reach out to them & leverage their power. A good first move is to follow them on LinkedIn & connect with them professionally. Consider making yourself known to them by engaging with their content & tagging them in your own content. Following on from this the best thing to do is contact them directly via InMail in LinkedIn or contact their relative agents.

When working with an influencer (directly or through an agent) it is important to do a background check. If the influencer has done any partnership work before ask them if they have any analysis reports, or post campaign analysis' on how the partnership did. Another vital part of a background check is to ask the influencer or their agent to provide demographic details of the influencers followers. If ou are going to partner with an influencer it is important that you are reaching the right target audience.

It is advised to have a formal meeting either directly with the influencer or with their agent. Formally outline all the roles & responsibilities of both sides & ensure everyone is in agreement of what is expected from both sides.

Once you have identified what people are influential to your business the next step is to reach out to them & leverage their power. A good first move is to follow them on LinkedIn & connect with them professionally. Consider making yourself known to them

Once all roles & responsibilities are outlined and agreed it is important to create a legally binding contract. Ensure this document is signed by both parties before proceeding to partnering.

It’s advised to create a post campaign analysis after working with an influencer. Set out engagement & performance targets before the partnership & to determine the success of the partnership you can see if you reached them.

Analyzing Engagement

Analysing content performance across different channels will give you strong insight into what different customers exist across different channels and the difference in the types of content customers want to consume on different channels.

Analysing content performance will make you a more proactive & effective salesperson on social media. It will allow you to be more agile and adaptable to the ever-changing needs and wants of both current and future customers.

Now you know what types of customers are on different channels & the difference in the types of content they want to consume across different channels you can begin to develop a content sharing strategy based on who you are trying to reach.
Your social selling strategy may adapt, and change based on the results of your content performance. Analyze what content is yielding the best engagement rates & do more of what works.

[3.4.3.2] Tools which help to identify the best performing platforms and content include: Google Analytics, Sprout Social and others.